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# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With  
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.

## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

**President**

E. Franklin Pope

**Objectives of the Club:** To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Club Publications:** THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on club activities.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Membership Fees:** Individual (yearly) \$23

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Family (yearly) \$25

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**Membership application, correspondence :**

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After 10 a.m.

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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# Welcome, New Members

## Ottawa Area

Robert L. Armstrong & Family  
James E. Beckett & Family  
Lillian Fallis & Family  
Marilyn G. Glenn  
Beverly L. Harvey  
Christopher D. Heinrich  
Sonja E. Henneman  
Thomas J. Irwin & Family  
Viviane Legault  
Sally M. McIntyre & Frank J. Hutterer  
Gord Robertson & Lorna McLean  
Katherine Thomas, David Beadle & Jennifer Thomas  
Lois T. Thompson  
Laura J. Thornhill  
Darlene Van Tassel  
Dorie Walker

## Other Areas

Kim Taylor  
RR #1  
New Liskeard, Ont.  
P0J 1P0

Donna Thompson  
Box 11  
Pakenham, Ont.  
K0A 2X0



Doreen Watler, Chairman  
Membership Committee  
August 1992



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# The 1992 Soirée Honorary Membership And The 1991 OFNC Awards

*Enid Frankton and Members of the Awards Committee*

The annual Soirée was held this year on 29 May, at the Unitarian Church as usual. The warm evening made the balcony overlooking the Ottawa River a pleasant place to stroll and chat while enjoying the refreshments provided by Eileen Evans and her efficient helpers.

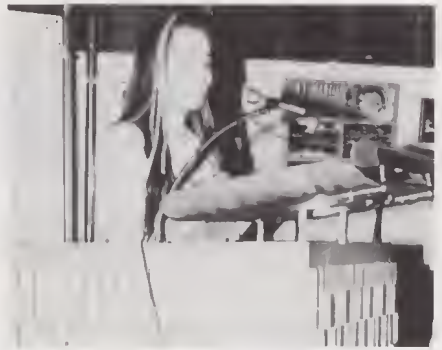
Two displays were set up by Macoun Field Club members. Something You Need to Know About Lichens was presented by Katherine Kitching and Terri Oda. They received the first and third prizes. The display on The Ring-necked Pheasant by Pascal Lussier received second prize. When we all gathered in the church hall, the president of the Intermediate Section of the Macoun Field Club, Rebecca Danard, gave an interesting and lively account of the year's activities.

A display of photographs and artwork was judged by members casting ballots. The winning photograph was by Tony Beck, his delightful composition of Prairie Dogs. Diane Lepage received Honourable Mention for her photograph of an American Copper Butterfly, and a second Honorable Mention went to Loren Gaertner for her photograph of an Eastern Cottontail.

Frank Pope, President, was unable to attend, and Colin Gaskell, Chairman of the Excursions & Lectures Committee, hosted the evening and acted as Master of Ceremonies. An Honorary Membership and all four of our Club Awards were presented, by members of the Awards Committee. Citations are summarized following, and will appear in full in a coming issue of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*.

## **Honorary Membership**

Honorary Membership was conferred on Elaine Dickson. She has been a member of the Club since 1968, a member of the Council for many years, and has been deeply involved in numerous Club activities. She has provided valuable services on various committees including Membership, Excursions & Lectures, Nominating and Macoun Field Club. She has led walks on flowers, trees, winter weeds, autumn colours, general interest and family outings. She has operated the Club telephone since 1976 and has graciously answered endless enquiries on all aspects of the Club's undertakings. She received the Service Award in 1981, and the Member of the Year Award in 1985, and it is fitting that she has now received the highest honour the Club can offer.



Top, left to right: John Furlong and Bill Gummer playing our attendees in with "oldies"; Katherine Kitching and Terri Oda receiving their prizes for their exhibit on lichens.

Centre, left to right: Pascal Lussier receiving his prize for his Ring-Necked Pheasant exhibit; Rebecca Danard gave a lively account of the Macoun Field Club Intermediates' activities.

Bottom, left to right: Colin Gaskell congratulates Tony Beck on his winning photograph; Ellaine Dickson, our new Honorary Member.



*Our thanks to Tony Beck and Dan Brunton for these photographs.*

Top, left to right: Bill Gummer receiving the George McGee Service Award from Barbara Campbell of Awards Committee; Mike Murphy receiving Member of the Year Award from Enid Frankton, Chairman of Awards Committee.

Centre, left to right: Albert Dugal, 1991 recipient of our Conservation Award; Michael Runtz receives the Anne Hanes Natural History Award from Dan Brunton of Awards Committee.

Bottom: Larry Neily, recipient of the 1991 President's Prize from Roy John, our Past President.

*Our thanks to Tony Beck and Dan Brunton for these photographs.*

### **Member of the Year Award**

This award went to Michael Murphy for his exceptional service to the OFNC, which he has effectively represented at municipal meetings, public hearings, media events, and technical committees. He developed and produces "The Green Line", the popular conservation newsletter that is inserted into each issue of *Trail & Landscape*. He is chairman of the Computer Management Committee, and has acted as judge for OFNC awards at the Regional Science Fair. He has helped to make our Club a relevant and important environmental organization in the Ottawa Valley and beyond.

### **The George McGee Service Award**

This award, recently renamed, went to Bill Gummer in recognition of his dedication, hard work, and readiness to step in when a capable leader was needed. He has been a Club member since 1971 and has served as a member of the Council, Corresponding Secretary, Vice-President and President. He has also been chairman of the Nominating and Awards Committees. He is an Associate Editor of *Trail & Landscape* and has produced a 20-year index of that publication, a challenging job well done.

### **Conservation Award**

The Conservation Award went to Albert Dugal for the second time; he won it in 1981, the first year for our current award program. For over a decade, Albert has lobbied, argued and demonstrated for the protection of important natural areas across the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. He has carried out an extensive study of the Leitrim Wetlands and his 1990 article in *Trail & Landscape* has been used as a primary reference by various parties with an interest in the area. He has set new standards of excellence in his work on conservation.

### **The Anne Hanes Natural History Award**

This important award went to Michael Runtz, one of the Ottawa Valley's most prominent naturalists. He has an expert knowledge of the bird populations, the natural history features and the values of this area. His love of wildlife photography has contributed to the spectacular success of his recent book *Moose Country: Saga of Woodland Moose*. He has earned the honor of this award through his important contributions to the natural world — and to naturalists — throughout the Ottawa Valley.

### **President's Prize**

On behalf of Roy John, the President's Prize for 1991 was presented to Larry Neily, who has run the Bird Status Line since the summer of 1986. Callers - who accessed the line about 250 times a week in 1988 and are now estimated to exceed this rate - are pleased by Larry's friendly response, his interest in their calls, and his broad knowledge of his subject. His telephone log also provides much of the valuable data for bird observation reports appearing in *Trail & Landscape*.☐



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# Planning for the 114th Annual Business Meeting of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

*Frank Pope - President*

The Annual Business Meeting is that one occasion during the year when the outgoing Council reports to the membership on its management of Club assets and activities; and the membership responds by officially accepting these reports, approving the proposed slate of officers and Council members for the next year, and giving any direction deemed necessary.

Although this is probably the most important meeting of the year from the perspective of the Club as an organization, it is not always well attended. Over the years many different formats have been tried in an effort to attract a bigger turn-out.

This year the Council has decided to try a format intended to speed up the discussion of the reports and to focus attention on some particular aspect of Club activity. The plan for the 114th A.B.M. is as follows:

- (1) The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at which time the reports will be available for study. Refreshments will be available in the auditorium at that time.
- (2) The business session will begin at 8:00 p.m. and follow the usual order except that reports will not be read. Instead, responsible officials will introduce their reports and answer questions.
- (3) An extra business item will be approval of the revised Constitution and By-Laws. (A fashionable topic.)
- (4) Featured at this meeting will be the Conservation Committee, led by Jane Topping. A short presentation will be followed by discussion. Covered will be the activities of the Committee over the past few years including successes and failures, current issues, resources requirements, future direction.

The conservation-minded among our members should not miss this meeting. Come join us and help chart future efforts to conserve our natural heritage. (See "Coming Events" for time and place of meeting.)<sup>□</sup>

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# Nominations for OFNC Awards

Nominations are requested from Club members for the following awards:

Honorary Membership  
Member of the Year Award  
George H. McGee Service Award  
Conservation Award  
Anne Hanes Natural History Award

Descriptions of these awards appear in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* 96(3): 367(1982). With the exception of Honorary Membership, all nominees must be members in good standing.

Nominations and supporting information must be received no later than December 12th, 1992. Submit them directly to Enid Frankton, Chairman, Awards Committee, 2297 Fox Crescent, Ottawa K2B 7K5.☐

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## Call for Nominations for OFNC Council

The Nominating Committee is responsible for providing a slate of candidates for election of **officers** and other **Council members**.

We wish to remind club members that they may nominate candidates for the Council. Nominations require the signatures of the nominator and a statement of willingness to serve in the specified position by the nominee. Some relevant background information would be helpful.

Nominations and other data must be sent to Bill Gummer, Chairman, Nominating Committee, 2230 Lawn Avenue, Ottawa K2B 7B2, to arrive no later than November 14, 1992. ☐

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**DEADLINE:** Material intended for the January-March 1992 issue must reach the Editor by November 1, 1992. Send your manuscripts to:

Bill Gummer  
2230 Lawn Ave.,  
Ottawa, Ontario, K2B 7B2  
Phone (613) 596-1148.☐

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# Fletcher Wildlife Garden Update

*Elise Stevenson*

David Tomlinson, the Garden's architect, was honoured with two awards (Regional Honour and National Merit) at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects in April. The project was recognized as a landmark initiative because of its scope and degree of collaboration between governments, professionals and volunteer groups. These awards are indeed an honour as they enhance the project's image which in turn will assist us in our search for ongoing funding. We have raised over \$45,000 for 1992 projects, mainly from the Environmental Partners Fund and the Environmental Youth Corps. Two students have been hired for the summer through the Environmental Youth Corps and have been assisting with a variety of activities including weeding, watering, finishing off the sedge meadow dam and pulling out purple loosestrife.



*Bird box installation by Don Cuddy in Ash Woodlot, March 1992*

Visitors to the Garden will notice several changes since last summer. The grass has been left unmowed except for a series of walking paths, adding a definite 'wild' look to the site quite distinct from the adjacent Arboretum! Bird boxes constructed at a workshop in November have also been installed. Bill Holland has been keeping an eye on the nature of the occupants as he conducts his bird inventory – it seems that squirrels and starlings have declared the majority of them home. Perhaps next year will bring some more desirable species!

Plant and insect inventories were initiated this year by Stephen Darbyshire and Bruce Gill. The newly formed sedge meadow pond is home to many bugs which

Bruce is collecting for eventual display in the interpretive centre. Desirée Salada has been helping Bruce and is also deciphering the tracks collected from

the mammal sampling tubes. Initial results reveal many field and house mice, a number of very messy shrews, and the odd chipmunk. The Macoun Club has also contributed to the gathering of inventory data by spending a day last fall collecting insects using pit fall, pan and sweep net traps.

A test plot for wildflowers was created this spring in the location of the future butterfly meadow. The area has been divided into a series of plots, some containing transplants, others seeded, with the goal of finding the species and method most successful at outcompeting the surrounding grass. This understandably requires much patience and digging power! In February, Landscape Ontario (Ottawa Chapter) joined the project as an associate partner and is initiating the development of the model backyard garden. A committee headed up by Eileen Chivers is actively raising funds from its members and, along with students from Algonquin College, will begin work on the garden this fall. We are delighted with the enthusiasm and commitment they are bringing to the project.

The new woodlot at the entrance to the site on Prince of Wales Drive is also beginning to take shape. Trees have been replanted from the location of the new Highway 416 and are doing very well thanks to all the rain we have had this summer. This, however, is only the beginning. We are looking for enthusiastic people to transplant many of the trees from the nursery as well as outside sources. Please see the calendar below for dates. We also require volunteers with vehicles suitable for moving trees. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Following is a schedule of activities for this fall:

Date & Time	Activity	Location	Materials
Sept. 12, 13	Patio Construction	Backyard garden	
Sept. 12, 13	Tree planting	Ball diamond on Prince of Wales Drive	Shovel
Sept. 19, 20	Tree planting		
Oct. 17, 18	Tree planting		
Oct. 24, 25	Tree planting		
Oct. 31	Mulching of beds	Backyard garden	

Please also save the leaves from your garden for spreading in the ash woodlot. If you have a few hours available for any of the above activities or require directions for leaf dumping, please call Elise Stevenson at 230-3276.☐



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# Life Cycles: The Tale of a Short-Tailed Shrew

*Isabelle Nicol*

Whispering, shifting snow and the movement of melting ice crystals were heard along the tunnel. Light filtered through the snow cover, the palest luminescent glow. The floor was packed by the passage of many feet and dank, stale, moisture-laden air hung heavily in the passageways.

On that short winter day darkness descended quickly and silence reigned for a time. Suddenly, high pitched squeaks were heard rapidly advancing along one of the corridors, and a darting grey shape appeared. Its tiny black eyes and ears were almost hidden in velvety fur and its bristly pointed snout twitched erratically. The highly agitated creature, scuffling and twittering, continued along the tunnel which led to the forest floor with its smell of decaying leaves.

Now, as he chased along the corridor, he met with an intruder; another shrew had come into his domain, and when he encountered it, he threatened and advanced with loud cries. The intruder advanced also and they touched whiskers, estimating each other, then the intruder rose upon his haunches and squeaked shrilly at the other. They then squeaked at one another more intensely still. But the intruder, already made uneasy by this strange place, turned and ran up the frozen crystalline tunnel and out onto the snow.

As he made his way up the tunnel, a shrouded form sat in a nearby pine, patiently aware of every movement of the tiny creature. Each minute sound of the progress of tiny claws upon icy snow was noted, and the appearance of the tiny dark shape upon the white surface had a galvanizing effect on the great horned owl. Immediately she lifted from her perch and dropped upon the small black form, one taloned foot reaching out and clutching the shrew, and in a swirl of shimmering snow, she lifted and flew back to the nest in the big pine where two feathered youngsters awaited her return.

Above the calm of the shrew's subterranean home existed a hostile world, often noisy with the hiss and grinding of winter blizzards where iced trees swayed and crackled, and painfully cold on days when an ivory sun shone weakly through a milky haze. Then there were the days when the sun's brilliant rays struck a crystalline earth, splintering into thousands of painful shards of light. The north wind, too, could play havoc on small northern creatures as it blew frigidly over an ice-bound land, quickly sucking the life from tiny bodies.

But down here it was warmer, safer, and if worse came to worse and his preferred food did not appear, the shrew could run along the leaf strewn tunnel

and eat of the abundant store of seeds, and perhaps a luckless hibernating insect. He lived in the network of tunnels created by mice and voles, built upon the forest floor underneath insulating layers of snow. And this hidden world was made more comfortable by the many vent holes that had been pushed through to the surface to rid the tunnels of harmful gases created by the decaying leaves.

Here he was safe, except for the one animal that could follow him through the tunnel system and prey upon him, as he himself preyed upon the mice and voles - the lithe, quick and deadly weasel.

But now there were days when a south wind blew and the snow responded, melting and granulating. The tunnels began to collapse, leaving snaking passageways exposed. There would now be a release of sorts from the constant gnawing in his belly, for the world would explode with the hordes of insects hibernating all around him.

Early summer found the grey form of the shrew rummaging noisily in the underbrush relishing the slugs and grubs that his ramblings produced. With his pointed twitching snout, leaves rustled and were pushed aside accompanied by squeals and chitters. Suddenly he sensed a small animal nearby. A young rabbit, having just left the home nest, was crouched amongst the leaves under the bush. The rabbits' instincts told him to keep still, but against the tiny creature now approaching through the leaves, though he himself was many times larger, keeping still was a mistake that would cost him his life.

The shrew cautiously approached and suddenly bit the little rabbit twice in the leg. As soon as he bit, a mixture of saliva and venom flowed along a groove between the sharp, orangy front incisors, into the wound and quickly made its way to the rabbit's heart causing it to slow down. Within seconds his breathing had also slowed and he became paralyzed, going into a coma. Standing only inches away, his mobile snout sniffing towards his stricken victim, the shrew knew it would be only minutes before he could ease the pain in his stomach. When the rabbit had stopped moving, the shrew moved closer and began to eat, his jaws moving quickly, tearing and pulling at the animal. Then, having gorged himself, he dragged his bloated belly over the ground and made for his nest in a nearby brushpile. He slept, released temporarily from the ever-present ache.

Though smaller than the young rabbit and the mice and voles he attacked, the shrew was a fast and ferocious creature. From the day he was on his own, his life was one of high pitched intensity, a frantic, frenetic search for food. Every minute of wakefulness was spent in such vociferous searchings that he burnt up energy at an alarming rate. He was very hungry. In fact, he was virtually hungry all of the time. From the moment of wakefulness, and though perhaps replete when he had gone to sleep, he was off again pursued by his own worst enemy, the never-ending need to stoke the little furnace of his very being. His metabolism so high that his pulse and breathing were many times faster than that of

larger mammals, he had to find, to eat, to digest, and to convert into energy his own weight in food every few hours.

The sensitive fine silken whiskers on his snout served as pathfinders and prey locators. But the chitterings and squeakings he emitted served another very useful purpose. Like the bat it was a sonar system. He caught the echoes of his own squeaks bouncing back to him and was able to decipher the information, information that often helped him get around in his dim, dark world, but which also helped him identify living prey.

Soon the shrew awakened and though he had eaten his fill of the rabbit only recently, he was already in a frantic race against starvation. Hesitating for seconds in the opening under the brushpile, the sun glinted off his wiry whiskers and splashed upon the rocks, dappling the emerald leaves near his den. He then scurried quickly through the undergrowth along his usual route which lead to a small pond where there was always an abundance of food with little expenditure of energy; all kinds of insects were to be found, perhaps a juicy earthworm, a snail or even a salamander. Against smaller creatures than himself, he had no need of his venom and the toothsome prey was easily overwhelmed. But his venom could serve another very useful purpose for he could use it to paralyze his prey and so stockpile snails, insects and earthworms against lean times.

But now he was suddenly aware of a presence close by. He moved quickly, taking the animal by surprise. A small wood frog had been sitting under a rocky ledge by the pond. Taken unaware, he was suddenly bitten by a furry, miniscule projectile. The small frog's brain was pierced by the sharp incisors of the shrew, the poison unnecessary for the frog died immediately. So ravenous was the shrew that he quickly started to eat, protected only by the darkness of the night and the overhanging ledge of rock under which the frog had been sitting. The little jaws moved swiftly, their ragged orange tipped teeth tearing, pulling, chewing; in five minutes the shrew had eaten the head and shoulders and front legs of its victim; ten minutes later the killer was sated. Little remained of the frog but a few scraps. And now the shrew sat upon his haunches and daintily proceeded with his toilet, cleaning first his face with his hind feet, then washing his fur with his pink tongue and combing it with his toes. He then quickly turned back to his nest to sleep, his body having already begun to rapidly assimilate his meal.

But now he was suddenly aware of a different presence, a presence which caused him to become tuned into a different kind of need, a desire for contact with another of his kind. He found the female shrew very close by and he uttered excited clicking sounds as he approached her. At first, she was not receptive and squeaked irritably when he advanced. When he continued she broke into a high-pitched chatter, but gradually she came to tolerate his presence and he was able to approach her more closely. When she was ready, he mounted her from behind, holding her with his mouth by the fur of her neck and clasping



her between his front legs. After mating, he dismounted but they mated again a number of times that day.

Within a short time the female shrew was looking for a den, and chose one under a rotting stump. She moved into the cavity under the stump and searched out grasses and leaves which she skillfully wove together into a seven-inch ball. Inside this compact nest she created a chamber about three inches around.

And in this grassy, cozy home, after about twenty days, she bore five young which huddled together. They were miniscule, not much bigger than the purple juniper berries which beaded the branches overhanging her den. The babies were naked, pink and wrinkled; toothless, blind and deaf.

Their mother now not only had to provide for her own overwhelming needs for nourishment, but also to produce the milk for the tiny beings she had borne. She left the nest site and rustled and squeaked her way through the leaf litter, appearing above the surface at intervals. She surfaced not far from a small garter snake still sluggish in the cool morning sun, and she approached cautiously. Suddenly she pounced, biting it repeatedly, and as the snake tried to escape she held onto its back. But in the deeply forested woods the snake managed to climb a fern and so escaped the shrew. The shrew searched noisily for her departed meal for some time before leaving to search for less active prey. The snake, however, soon lost his grip and fell to the ground where he grew more sluggish still from the shrew's venom and was discovered by a young coyote who pawed at the snake and wrinkled his nose at the acrid smell. The coyote was called away by his mother and siblings on a more important errand and the snake was forgotten, but soon rediscovered by the many insects which ran over the forest floor.

After about a week the female's young were crawling about in their nest and their fur had begun to appear through the pink wrinkled skin, but they were still blind, toothless and their tiny ears were closed. But in another week their first teeth began to poke through the small gums and the ears to open to their first sounds. Some ten days after this their eyes opened.

They made clicking sounds as they kept contact with one another and their mother and as they explored their nest. They played with one another, pushing, and wrestling. After four weeks, the little mother bundled her babies out of the nest. She was preparing to mate again. She would have one more litter that year.

Having been born early the summer before and having lived most of his life at a pace which caused him to rapidly age, the male shrew continued his daily jaunts to the pond where his life was made a bit easier by the still abundant food. His teeth had become badly worn from the constant gnawing. One time in his wanderings, he came upon the remains of a hare killed by a weasel. After sating himself the weasel had moved on but there was still plenty of hare left. Already decomposition had set in, the flesh softening, and maggots were at work but the shrew nonetheless made short work of this sudden bounty.



And, too, he had his small cache of woodland snails and insects. He would choose a fat, juicy snail and after eating it, would move its shell to the entrance of his burrow, where they collected in little piles.

But now he was a grizzled old shrew. His time was nearing an end, his teeth worn, his heart about to give up. It wouldn't take much. It was an early winter that year and snow was wanting, the cold bitter and biting. Without the insulating protection of the snow, he was not able to battle the cold and retain the frenetic search for food. Weak and tired, the cold finally claimed him one night, and he died within his den, his tired enfeebled heart slowing, until it finally stopped. ▢

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## In Memoriam: Duncan M. Anderson

We are saddened to advise you that Duncan Anderson, a member of our club, died suddenly, July 12, 1992, at the Ottawa Civic Heart Institute. We will remember Duncan as an avid birdwatcher. He was either at the front of the group peering through his scope, or at the back puffing on his pipe.

Duncan was a Professor of Geography at Carleton University and was looking forward to retirement when he would have time to serve on committees, and share his expertise and knowledge on land use, planning, and geographic aspects of the environments.

The club extends deepest sympathy to his wife, Glenneth. ▢

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## Ottawa Duck Club Inc. 16th Annual Wildlife Art & Carving Show & Sale

OFNC Members should be aware that the Ottawa Duck Club will be holding its 16th Annual Show & Sale on 23 (evening only)-24-25 October this year, in the Nepean Sportsplex on Woodroffe Avenue. The purpose of this activity is to raise funds for wildlife conservation in the Ottawa area. Our Club has generally had an exhibit at the show and plans to do so this year.

The exhibition is open to wildlife carvers, antique and contemporary decoy collectors, wildlife artists, photographers, and taxidermists. Carving and painting demonstrations are permitted and encouraged.

Call Elaine Dickson (729-1554) for further information. ▢

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# Eleventh Annual Christmas Bird Count Roundup 1991-1992 Period

*Bruce M. Di Labio*

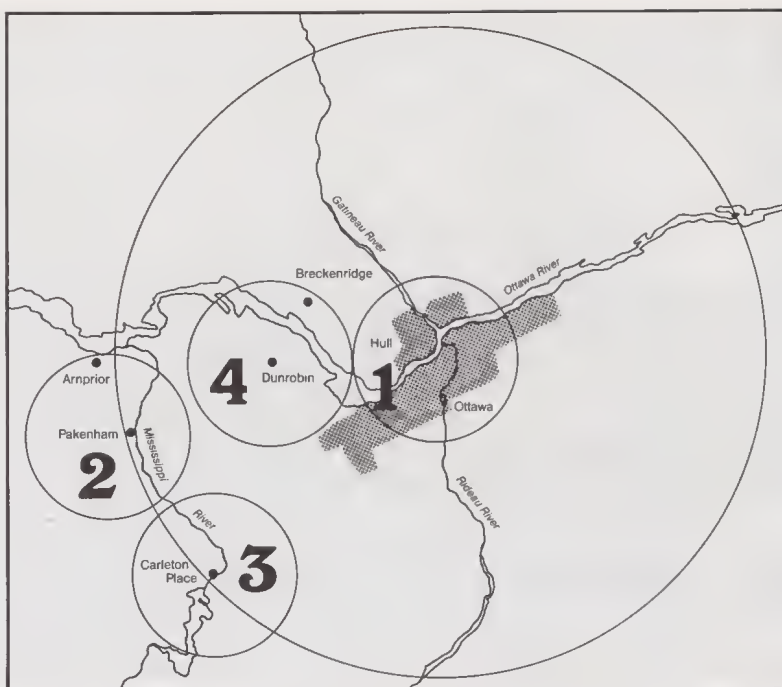
With the hectic pace of the season, many still found time to participate in the annual local Christmas bird counts, a tradition in the Ottawa Valley. My first "CBC" count was in 1971, over twenty years ago, and the excitement I felt anticipating this count as a young adolescent still remains with me. Today we find that new counts have emerged throughout the region, now numbering up to 10 and finding time to participate on all counts is a virtual impossibility. As a result, people are becoming more selective as to which count they will be involved with and participant numbers are down. It is certainly understandable. Times have changed as we strive to attain a more affluent lifestyle, greater responsibility and commitment, and less leisure time is the price we pay. Whatever happened to the carefree days of youth?

Another factor influencing count numbers is the participant fee, which has risen from \$1.50 to \$5.00 over the past ten years; this fee is required by the National Audubon Society which publishes our results. With people "tightening their purse strings" this increase has not been well received. Despite these obstacles, we must not underestimate the value of our contributions. These data, which have been compiled since the early 1900's, have become an essential component in analysing population trends, range extensions, number fluctuations, decline in species and more recently, habitat loss and its effects on bird populations. With our new enviro-conscience society the burden of preserving what habitat and species we have left rests with us. Our participation not only benefits the scientific world but also generates participation in local interest groups. So let's keep the enthusiasm for these counts alive!

Many thanks to all of the compilers, field observers and feeder watchers who have again helped make these counts a success.

**Table 1. Number of People Involved**

Count Name	Field Observers	Feeder Watchers
1 Ottawa-Hull	80	102
2 Pakenham-Arnprior	27	9
3 Carleton Place	29	41
4 Dunrobin-Breckenridge	29	9



*Map showing the locations of the four local Christmas  
Bird Counts in relation to the Ottawa District.  
(The large circle is the boundary of the 50 km radius of the District.)*

**Table 2. Summary for the 1991-1992 Period.**

Count Name	Date	Compiler	Total Species	Total Individuals
1 Ottawa-Hull	Dec. 15	Daniel St. Hilaire	69 (plus 1 hybrid and 1 exotic)	20,956
2 Pakenham-Arnprior	Dec. 26	Michael Runtz	48	6,435
3 Carleton Place	Dec. 28	Michael Jaques	41	5,857
4 Dunrobin-Breckenridge	Dec. 28	Bruce Di Labio	51	7,445

**Final Totals: 77 Species and 40,693 individuals**



*John Dubois (left) and Daniel St. Hilaire discussing the day's sightings.*



*Daniel Toussaint recording on wall charts the observations reported by the sectors.  
(Photos by Bruce Di Liabio.)*



Table 3. 1991-1992 Christmas Bird Count Roundup.

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	Total
Red-throated Loon	1**				1
Canada Goose	5				5
American Black Duck	739			21	760
Mallard	247		2	43	292
Black X Mallard Hybrid	36				36
Ring-necked Duck	2				2
Red-crested Pochard	[1]				1
Common Goldeneye	398	2	43*	4*	447
Barrow's Goldeneye	3				3
Bufflehead	2				2
Hooded Merganser	4				4
Common Merganser	90*	4	12		106
Bald Eagle	3*				3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8**	1	5*	1	15
Cooper's Hawk	4		1	1	6
Northern Goshawk	2	1	1	6*	10
Red-tailed Hawk	3	2	2	2	9
Rough-legged Hawk	3				3
American Kestrel	6	5		4	15
Merlin	1			1**	2
Peregrine Falcon	1				1
Gray Partridge	31	37		17	85
Ruffed Grouse	10	13	10	35	68
Herring Gull	118		1		119
Iceland Gull	3				3
Glaucous Gull	17				17
Great Black-backed Gull	92				92
Rock Dove	3800	526	591	158	5,075
Mourning Dove	299	115	190*	217*	821
Great Horned Owl	1	12		15	28
Snowy Owl	2	4		1	7
Northern Hawk-Owl	2**	1***		1	4
Barred Owl	2	1***		2	5
Long-eared Owl		1**		1	2
Belted Kingfisher	1		2		3
Downy Woodpecker	109	49	63	59	280
Hairy Woodpecker	98	46	69	101	314
Three-toed Woodpecker		[1]		1	2
Black-backed Woodpecker				1	1
Northern Flicker	1				1
Pileated Woodpecker	14	23*	4	22	63
Horned Lark	9	108	1	19	137

Table 3. (continued)

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	Total
Blue Jay	248	366	380	379*	1,373
American Crow	591	118	502*	148	1,359
Common Raven	48*	40	32*	62*	182
Black-capped Chickadee	2026	939	813	1295	5,073
Red-breasted Nuthatch	33	92	8	40	173
White-breasted Nuthatch	155	69	92	96	412
Brown Creeper	9	12	5	7	33
Golden-crowned Kinglet		9	2	8	19
American Robin	12		1		13
Northern Mockingbird	1				1
Bohemian Waxwing	739	248	117	375	1,479
Cedar Waxwing	113	5	77		195
Northern Shrike	12	4	4	9	29
European Starling	3010	451	359	237	4,057
Yellow-rumped Warbler	2				2
Northern Cardinal	133*	2	25*	5	165
American Tree Sparrow	125	142	136	169	572
Song Sparrow	6	1		2	9
White-throated Sparrow	2				2
Dark-eyed Junco	99	24	17	75	215
Lapland Longspur		1			1
Snow Bunting	1007	1146	773	1938	4,864
Red-winged Blackbird	1				1
Common Grackle	1	1		1	3
Brown-headed Cowbird	4			1***	5
Pine Grosbeak	8	67		30	105
Purple Finch	34	13	62	7	116
House Finch	874*	48	73*		995
Red Crossbill		1		10*	11
White-winged Crossbill	1		19	26	46
Common Redpoll	1022	80	102	667	1,871
Pine Siskin	79	117	3	56	255
American Goldfinch	782	221	265	282	1,550
Evening Grosbeak	456	617	670	590	2,333
House Sparrow	3155	649	323	197	4,324

\* - Record high

\*\* - New species for the count

\*\*\* - ties record high

[ ] - exotic □

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# Where Was Spring?

## The Cornwall Trip, March 1, 1992

*Cendrine Huemer*

You would have never known that spring was 3 weeks away. Several inches of snow had fallen by day break. Yet even though the visibility was poor, it remained my best day of birdwatching so far. As a beginner, I have always been amazed at how driven experts are. Through all kinds of weather and, horror, before daybreak, there they go tramping around sewage lagoons, dumps, marshes, dams, insect-infested thickets, to catch the elusive rarity or the latest record. I was in for first-hand experience.

We met our intrepid leader, Bruce Di Labio, at 8 a.m. at Tunney's Pasture. I had debated earlier whether to even leave the driveway because of the heavy snow. Since the destination was Cornwall, one hour away, the rest had either sensibly decided to stay home or thought better of it once they saw so few had shown up. Bruce, Tim Brophy and I were the only ones not to be deterred. We drove to Cornwall without seeing much more than crows.



*Deep snow didn't deter our group.*

At the Harvey's pit stop, we joined Rick and Wendy McQuaig for breakfast. When asked what we could expect today, Bruce simply guaranteed us snowflakes, and maybe some waterfowl.

We first registered our equipment at the border. Border guards are beginning to question the origin of expensive binoculars and photographic equipment and are thus suggesting that they be registered for expediency. We each had one or two items, except for Bruce who had a wide variety of binoculars, scopes, tripods, cameras, camera mounts, window mounts and assorted lenses. It's people like him who make the guards suspicious. Tim, mind you, had a gunstock-mounted scope which drew frowns from the guard until they realized we were harmless birdwatchers. However, the guard's suspicions that birdwatchers are eccentric were confirmed when he glanced out the window to see the blizzard.

We made our first stop at Reynold's Plant. We saw many waterfowl on the St. Lawrence River which, through the scope, I identified as miscellaneous specks but were verified as Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes and Greater Scaups. Ever-reliable Bruce also produced a rather dark Snowy Owl sitting on the edge of the ice.

In a hectic stop-and-go fashion, along South Grasse River Road, from our cars we spotted 6 Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, 15 Mourning Doves, a Purple Finch and my first American Tree Sparrow at various garden feeders. Thus ended the easy part of the journey.



*Birding at Hawkin's Point.*



The road to Hawkin's Point was not plowed so we walked a kilometer to the viewpoint, labouring to fit our feet in the truck tracks that were just a little too narrow for comfort. It was well worth the view over the dam. The vantage point gave full view of the Robert Moses Power Dam. The water there stays open year long, which makes it popular with overwintering and migrating waterfowl. Sometimes, environmental devastation produced by dams can also be taken advantage of by birds. And when birds are happy with one area and congregate, certain humans become ecstatically pleased and also become frequent visitors.

Visibility was poor at Hawkin's Point, since yes, it was still snowing, but we saw 12 Rock Doves, 5 Canada Geese and 2 Herring Gulls fly by. On the open water were American Black Ducks, Mallards, 380 Common Mergansers and over 200 Common Goldeneyes. Several Common Goldeneye males were initiating courtship, throwing back their heads while the females pretended they didn't notice and dove down below. Bruce sighted two Barrow's Goldeneyes but they instantly dove when we tried to look at them. Squadrons of Great Black-backed Gulls stood in various degrees of attention on the ice flows and scattered throughout were 7 Iceland Gulls, 2 Glaucous Gulls and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, which I missed. I was concentrating on the Goldeneye males wooing the female. They were doing the 'kick display' in which the male kicks his feet and stretches his head forward then throws it backwards, resting it on his back with his bill in the air. I wondered what it was about throwing your head back that was so attractive or desirable. The Mallards were much more polite with all the head bowing. Wendy and I paced around trying to keep warm and observing the ducks that were closer by since the boys were hogging their scopes. The surprise of the day was a flock of American Robins feeding on berries. Bruce deduced that they were migrants, even though it was very early.

The next destination was Polly's Gut, but a portion of East-West Road was not plowed. And, you guessed it, the snow had not abated... at all. As difficult as the first hike to Hawkin's Point had been, this one was twice as long. But Bruce had guaranteed us snowflakes; we had been forewarned. The road was empty and quiet. At the dead-end loop of East-West Road, we clambered over the snow-bank into mid-thigh snow, for a nice change from just knee-high snow. We were however rewarded with lovely and silent woods. The trees stood out starkly with a thick frosting of snow. Bruce squeaked and pished but was completely ignored by all birds. We headed to the water level station. After a long trudge, we were disappointed at first with a lone White-breasted Nuthatch. Things picked up with an albino-looking Mallard which turned out to be a piece of ice. Rick and Wendy gulped down their soup and coffee while we rested. A Northern Flicker called, and we saw so many (5) that they became common — "Oh, it's just another Flicker" — when it had been so exciting at first. They were also overwintering. We heard what we all thought was a Downy Woodpecker but turned out to be a Hairy Woodpecker. Bruce is not infallible, even though he is an accomplished identifier of specks bobbing in the distance on the water.

To top off the day, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers flew by, another 18 Robins sat in a bush, a Northern Cardinal hide in a pine grove and 100 Common Redpolls flocked at a feeder. But we still had to make it back to the car. It was still snowing just as hard. I almost gave up with my heavy Sorel boots.

I thought we'd seen a lot of species considering the conditions. But Bruce said it was a mediocre list for the area. To make up for it, he instructed me to also note down Mourning Doves fluffed up on a fence on the way back. He made sure to stop off at a pay-phone after going through the border uneventfully to reassure his wife Laurie that the group didn't get buried in snow.

On the way home, the sky cleared up and we arrived back in Ottawa at 4:30 in clear weather and bright sunshine. Some people don't consider birdwatching a sport. But believe me, when you go with professionals, it can be as strenuous as mountain climbing.☐



*Yes there was a lot of snow! (Photos by Cendrine)*

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# Presqu'ile Provincial Park Spring Trip

*Cendrine Huemer*

A bus full of excited people left Carlingwood at 6:30 a.m., March 29, 1992. Destination: waterbird heaven, in Presqu'ile Provincial Park, 3 1/2 hours away.

After a trip that felt like 4 days, due to the bump and grind of the old Laidlaw bus, and several pitstops, we arrived at Presqu'ile. The long ride was perfect for making new friends or getting re-acquainted. Due to the extremely cold spring, most of Presqu'ile Bay was still iced in. At Calf Pasture, the trip leaders, Bruce Di Labio and Jim Harris, jumped out and fell all over themselves trying to reach the shore. The main bulk of the birds were there: twenty species of waterfowl including 26 Tundra Swans, a Ruddy Duck, thousands of Greater Scaups and hundreds of Canvasbacks and Redheads. Land birds, on the other hand, were scarce. From the crowds of other birdwatchers there, it appeared to be optimum time for waterfowl migration at Presqu'ile, despite the cool temperatures and the icy bay.

After making sure everyone had seen everything, we drove to the popular lighthouse stop for lunch. Most of the activity there came from Common Goldeneyes, Oldsquaws and Red-bested Mergansers. The pebble beach, old lighthouse and sheltered bay make it a lovely spot for photographs.

Along Lakeshore Drive, we squeezed ourselves out of the bus yet again to see several Buffleheads bobbing on the waves.

The last stop in the park was Owen Point at Beach 4. The sandy beach was deserted. Even the unusual bathers were absent but thousands of Ring-billed Gulls were in a frenzy of courtship on Gull Island about 500 meters out.

We left the park at 2:30 for the drive home. Along the 401, we sighted numerous Red-tailed Hawks. On the Thousand Island Parkway, we detoured at Ivy Lea Village to view the Bald Eagles. During the winter, the water on the St. Lawrence is frozen along the Thousand Island Parkway, except for around Ivy Lea Village. The boat launch area is an excellent winter viewing point for Bald Eagles since 15-20 birds overwinter there every year. In a matter of half an hour, we recorded 7 species of raptors including 2 Bald Eagles, 2 Cooper's Hawks, 4 Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Northern Harrier, a Red-shouldered Hawk, 7 Red-tailed Hawks and 12 Turkey Vultures. A Great Blue Heron flew in and stood on the ice looking confused.

We finally returned to Carlingwood at 7 p.m. where we stiffly filed out of the bus, happy with our 49 species, 30 of which were observed in the Park. The day

was ideal since we were able not only to record some lifers but also to directly compare size and colouring of similar waterfowl.



*Searching for ducks off Lakeshore Drive.*



*Ellaine Dickson and others having lunch at lighthouse.*

*Photos by Cendrine Huemer. □*



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# One American Coot Drowns Another

Cyrille Goulet

An American Coot drowned one of its own kind before my very eyes on Friday, June 28th, 1991 at 6:50 a.m., in Amherst Point Migratory Bird Sanctuary, part of the beautiful Chignecto National Wildlife Area which lies 2 km off the Trans-Canada highway, just south of the New Brunswick-Nova Scotia boundary.

I was there specifically to add the coot to my "life-list" because my previous sightings had been inconclusive and I knew from *A Bird-finding Guide to Canada*, (1984), edited by Anne Leobold, that this site was one of its known habitats.

My visit to the area the day before had been a wash-out, or rather a black-out, because of the arrival at about 5:00 a.m. of the huge smoke cloud from the Baie Comeau forest fire.

I had returned with my wife after breakfast and identified thirty species, including Common Moorhens and Soras but no "lifer", so I just had to go back for a third try. This time I had decided to push my survey of the grounds as much as I could.

While I peered over a built-up bank at the far end of the refuge, near the cairn and several dikes, the noise and water splashing of a chase attracted my attention. I was at first delighted to see two American Coots through the 15-45 x zoom lens of my spotting scope, because I did not expect this to become a tragedy. The exercise took some five minutes, as the victim kept bobbing back to the surface ever time its attacker dismounted and let go its head.

The repeated dunkings only ceased when the hapless victim floated aimlessly, with its head hanging below the level of its more buoyant wings. At this point the attacker returned to the emergent weeds from which it had originally started the chase into open water.

Having in the past witnessed "water-borne" Mallard mating, I had at first thought that this was a similar situation but I suspect that it was a case of territory or nest protection. However, I have been unable to find anything on this subject in the literature at my disposal. I would therefore appreciate hearing from anyone who can elucidate the matter. (Home phone (613-)749-1798).<sup>□</sup>

# Ring-Billed Gulls in an Ottawa City Recreational Park

Louis L'Arrivée

In the Ottawa-Hull region, Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) arrive in March and stay in the area until lakes and rivers begin to freeze in late November or early December (Di Labio 1985). They are often seen along rivers, at municipal dumps, in fields, and are known to nest in the area (Di Labio 1985; Holliday 1985). As long as there is adequate space for free-flying, such as in open fields, they will occur in heavily populated areas (Holliday 1985).

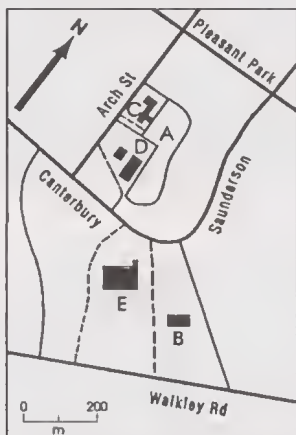


Figure 1. Map of Study Area

A: Canterbury Park where Ring-billed Gulls were observed loafing.

B: Observation Post (balcony of Lord Halifax Apts.)

C: Arch Street Public School.

D: Canterbury Community Club and Arena.

E: Canterbury High School.

In 1988, I investigated why open manicured fields were attractive to Ring-billed Gulls. From my apartment balcony (11th floor) in southeast Ottawa, I often observed them in Canterbury Park which is a field behind the Arch Street Public School and the Canterbury Community Club (Fig. 1). These birds also congregated in the field south of Canterbury High School. Although this field was beside my apartment building, I could not see it from my north-facing balcony. During 1988, Ring-billed Gulls congregated in Canterbury Park from mid-March through to late October or early November. This field is about  $23,300 \text{ m}^2$  in size, bounded by a fence on the north and east sides, and immediately beyond the fence are residential homes. To the west lay the Arch St. Public School, the Canterbury Community Club and its parking lot, while to the south lay a church and its parking lot. The centre of this field was about 540 m from my apartment building. The shortest distance from

this field to the Rideau River was 3.3 km while the shortest distance from it to the Ottawa River was 6.7 km.

Regular observations were correlated with environmental conditions in order to determine why Ring-billed Gulls were attracted to the field. On 20 different dates, beginning on April 4, 1988 and ending on October 22, 1988, I observed this field between 0700 and 0800 hr. I chose this time for my own convenience

and because human disturbance on the field was minimal then compared to the rest of the day. At 0700, 0715, 0730, and 0745, I counted the number of gulls in the field and noted any other activities. On 22 October, counts were done at 0715, 0730, 0745 and 0800 because it was still dark at 0700. (All times are given in Eastern Daylight Savings Time). All observations were made using 10X by 50 mm binoculars and a 9-30X spotting scope. Temperature and humidity were recorded from the information channel of the television and weather (including precipitation) was noted at the observation times of the study area. Observations were made only on days with good visibility. No observations were made on foggy days as I could not see the field from the balcony.

Table 1 shows the maximum, minimum, and average number of gulls observed during 0700-0800 hrs on 20 different dates as well as the average temperature, humidity, weather, and field conditions during the same time period. I used a couple of non-parametric statistical tests (Association Test, Rank-Sum Test) to determine if there was any correlation between numbers of gulls observed and temperature, humidity or field conditions (wet and/or with puddles, or dry/no puddles). There was a weak association between numbers observed and temperature or humidity. In other words, the average number of gulls in the field was higher at low temperatures and lower at high temperatures (range: -2 to 23.5 °C). Whereas, average numbers were higher at high humidities than at lower humidities (range: 40 to 99%). The correlation between numbers observed and field conditions was, however, much stronger than that for temperature and humidity. Both maximum number of gulls and average number of gulls observed during the 1-hour period were higher on days when the field was wet or had puddles.

The observation that Ring-billed Gulls are attracted to water is common knowledge. However, this "common knowledge" is rarely reported in the literature. In fact, I found only one indirect reference to it in an article by Cooke and Ross (1972). These authors observed a mixed-species flock of gulls at the Kingston City Dump from September to December 1968 and 1969. Ring-billed Gulls comprised 40% of the flock. Loafing groups at the dump site were observed in the water and on the shores of the river running beside the dump as well as on the flat open land around the dump. Gulls departed the area after local freezing of the river and Lake Ontario in December and Cooke and Ross suggested that the lack of drinking water forced their departure.

Drinking water may not be the only possible factor which attracts Ring-billed Gulls to a wet field or a field with puddles. It is possible that a wet field is forcing earthworms and other insects onto the surface on which the gulls will feed. However, I saw little evidence of foraging activity during the study. The gulls appeared to spend most of their time loafing. Blokpoel and Tessier (1986) report that Ring-billed Gulls will feed on insects, earthworms, grubs, food remains in public areas, and even hunt for voles in fields.

Other interesting observations were made during the study. Only adult gulls were observed loafing in the field. (Although immature gulls were present in the surrounding area in late summer and fall, I never saw them loafing in the field). On April 13, 17 and 20 one or more pairs were engaged in mating behaviour (beak raising, head bowing, both birds walking around each other or copulating). This is consistent with Di Labio's (1985) observations of copulation attempts by Ring-billed Gulls at the Nepean Dump from mid to late April. Di Labio (1985) also reported that gulls nested at the dump from May 13 to June 3, 1983, but due to landfill operations covering their nests, this nesting only occurred in that year and once again in 1985 (Di Labio 1986). I did not observe nesting in Canterbury Park. However, it is interesting to note from Table 1, that the highest number of pairs of gulls observed (5 and 7) occurred during the month of April. No pairs were observed after May 8. Pairs were not observed after this date because breeding gulls were nesting in other localities from May to July 1988. During the breeding season, at least one bird of a pair is on or near the nest at all times (H. Blokpoel, pers. comm.).

**Table 1.** Observations of Ring-billed Gulls in Canterbury Park between 0700 and 0800 hrs.<sup>1</sup>

Date	Av. Temp. °C	Av. Hum. %	Weather	Field Conditions	Number of Gulls Loafing			
					Max.	Min.	Av. of 4 Counts	Max. No. of Pairs <sup>2</sup>
April 4	9	99	Clear and cool, no clouds.	Several small to large snowmelt puddles.	14	6	11	4
April 7	3	97	Partly cloudy.	Several small to large snowmelt puddles.	90	65	82.5	5
April 9	0	94	Cloudy and windy.	Several small snowmelt puddles.	75	9	55.5	2
April 12	2	96	Partly cloudy.	Only three very small puddles.	40	28	34	5



Date	Av. Temp. °C	Av. Hum. %	Weather	Field Conditions	Number of Gulls Loafing			
					Max.	Min.	Av. of 4 Counts	Max. No. of Pairs <sup>2</sup>
April 13	1	70	Partly cloudy.	Small puddles completely gone.	51	35	42	7
April 15	2	99	Rain changing to partly cloudy.	Field wet with puddles.	110	98	103.75	7
April 17	3	80	Cloudy.	No puddles.	39	21	32.75	4
April 20	-2	97	Cloudy and hazy with light snow to clearing.	No puddles.	8	0	4.75	2
April 23	-0.5	92.5	Partly cloudy.	No puddles.	9	4	6.25	1
April 26	0	99	Cloudy and wet.	Field wet (rained over night).	19	9	13.75	1
April 29	7	99	Raining changing to cloudy.	Puddles present, field wet.	37	27	31	3
May 2	4	91	Cloudy.	Small residual puddles.	29	23	26.5	3
May 7	8.5	40	Clear.	Lush green no puddles.	2	0	1	-
May 8	6	61.5	Clear.	No puddles.	9	2	5	1
July 1	11	96.5	Cloudy to partly cloudy.	No puddles, grass light green.	19	1	6.75	-
July 9	23.5	66.5	Clear and sunny.	No puddles, field dry.	0	0	0	0

Date	Av. Temp. °C	Av. Hum. %	Weather	Field Conditions	Number of Gulls Loafing			
					Max.	Min.	Av. of 4 Counts	Max. No. of Pairs <sup>2</sup>
July 10	21.5	86.5	Clear and sunny.	No puddles, field dry.	0	0	0	0
Sept. 11	12	55	Clear.	Grass green and field appears wet.	26	15	23.75	-
Sept. 17	10.5	99	Clear.	Field green but not wet.	32	21	26.75	-
Oct. 22	4	90	Raining to raining with snow.	Field wet	13	0	3.25	-

<sup>1</sup>Counts were made at 0700, 0715, 0730 and 0745 hrs., except October 22 when counts were made at 0715, 0730, 0745 and 0800 (Could not see field due to darkness at 0700 hr.).

<sup>2</sup>One pair = Two gulls which appeared to be 1 foot (30 cm.) or less apart.

#### *Acknowledgements*

I thank H. Blokpoel for his personal communication. I also thank H. Blokpoel and F.R. Cook for reviewing an earlier draft of this article. Helpful suggestions were also provided by two anonymous reviewers.

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# The Ottawa-Hull 1992 Christmas Bird Count

This year's Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 20. Members interested in participating should contact Coordinator Daniel St. Hilaire of the Club's Birds Committee at 776-3822 (home phone), at 19 rue Connaught, Hull, J8Y 4C8. He will provide advice on action time, on sectors where counts will be made and sector leaders.

The final count figures will become an official Ottawa-Hull report for the National Audubon Society, and as usual participants will be asked to pay a fee, again \$5.

After the count has been finished there will be a meeting, beginning at 4 p.m., of all interested people involved, for review of the day, followed by a meal, and an official summary of numbers and species of birds. The location for this get-together will be advised by the sector leaders.

The dates of the other CBC's in the area, and their contact persons, are as follows:

Pakenham-Arnprior-Sat. 26 December: Mike Runtz (1-623-9106)

Carleton Place-Sun. 27 December: Mike Jaques (1-257-4105)

Dunrobin-Breckenridge-Sun. 3 January : Bruce Di Labio (729-6267).□

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## Ontario Field Ornithologists

This organization was formed in 1982. It publishes a journal, *Ontario Birds*, three times a year and, in between, the *OFO Newsletter*. It oversees the activities of the Ontario Bird Records Committee, conducts field trips in all parts of the province, and participates in and supports projects like Baillie Birdathon, and the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario*. It holds an annual Spring Field Meeting and in the fall an Annual General Meeting.

An OFO brochure will be available with more information at our fall monthly meetings.□

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### *Trail & Landscape Circulation*

928 copies of the July-September issue were mailed, 24 of them going out of Canada.□

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# Cedars

At first they seem like sufferers  
trapped in shadows.  
Their flayed bark shreds in strips,  
their dead limbs tangle like grey bones.  
The only green about them seems  
the green of undermoss  
and tips the squirrels have nipped from overhead  
to straggle in the duff.

But the little tips contain  
hoards of russet seedlings;  
the shadows come from upper branches'  
waves of evergreen;  
bones and raggedness  
taken from a distance  
become a smoothswept  
swirl of trunks  
crisscrossed with a symphony of lines  
visual at first  
then heard with concentration  
as the wind sweeps through  
with the heaving hissing sigh  
of cedars firm a hundred years  
still stretching.

They are versatile, persistent,  
patient in their spread,  
sprigging inchtall delicate  
out of red cored pulp;  
spindling headlong downhill  
over boulders into peat;  
angling to climb a hump and over  
aromatic, resinous,  
thickbrushed root to crown.

Tony Cosier<sup>α</sup>



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Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations recently?

Is there a colony of rare plants or a nesting site that needs protection?

Write up your thoughts and send them in to *Trail & Landscape*.

If you have access to an IBM or IBM-compatible computer using 5.25 inch diskettes, all the better. If you don't, we will happily receive submissions in any form — typed, written, printed or painted!☐

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# Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee  
For further information,  
call the Club number (722-3050).

*Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.*

**ALL OUTINGS:** *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and the activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

**REGISTERED BUS TRIPS:** *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Ellaine Dickson, 2037 Honeywell Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 0P7, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing.*

**EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE:** *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Club members must show their membership cards to gain access for Club functions after regular museum hours. There is a charge for parking in the museum lot.*

6:00 pm  
to approx.  
9:00 p.m.  
Date to be  
decided.

## VISIT TO THE INDIAN RIVER OBSERVATORY, ALMONTE

Leaders: Philip Martin (729-3218) and members of the  
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

Meet: Neatby Building, Front entrance off Carling Avenue,  
Central Experimental Farm.

Members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada have kindly offered to show us some of the current nighttime attractions. Bring warm clothing and a hot beverage! Please register as soon as possible with the club number (722-3050 after 10:00 a.m.). A map will be provided at the meeting place. As soon as the date has been settled Philip Martin will advise those whose names have been recorded.

Unfavourable weather might necessitate rescheduling.

Sunday  
4 October  
8:00 a.m.  
to  
4:00 p.m.

## AUTUMN COLOURS AT THE SHAW WOODS

Leader: Albert Dugal

Meet: Sears, Carlingwood Shopping Centre, Carling and Woodroffe Avenues.

Cost: \$10.00 (see Registered Bus Trips for Details). This unique and complex woods contains a diversity of mature forest trees (many ranging in age from 150 to 200 years) located near Lake Doré in Renfrew County. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Shaw family of Pembroke, the Canadian Museum of Nature and the Nature Conservancy of Canada this magnificent woodland has been preserved in its natural state. Bring a lunch for this scenic excursion.

Tuesday  
13 October  
8:00 p.m.

## OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

### ASSESSING NEOTROPICAL BIRD POPULATIONS

Speaker: Janette Dean

Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

Janette will provide an overview of a number of different programmes and methods for studying trends in bird populations, particularly those affecting neotropical species. She will assess projects such as MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) and regional bird censuses and present an opinion on the cumulative results of this cooperative research.

Sunday  
18 October  
10:00 a.m.

## 15th ANNUAL JOINT OUTING WITH THE OTTAWA RIDEAU TRAIL CLUB

Meet: Booth and Albert Streets, southwest corner of the parking lot.

This will be a general interest walk on various nature trails in the Mer Bleue conservation area. Bring a lunch for this full-day outing. For further information telephone Bob Bennett (749-7440).

Saturday  
24 October  
8:00 a.m.

## FALL BIRDING ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER

Leader: Tony Beck

Meet: Britannia Drive-in Theatre, Carling Avenue.

A half-day outing to observe migrating waterfowl at various spots along the river.



**Sunday**  
**1 November**  
**9:00 a.m.**      **LATE FALL RAMBLE IN THE GATINEAU**  
Leader: Philip Martin  
Meet: Supreme Court Building, front entrance, Wellington Street.  
A general interest walk to see what we can find: nuts, fruit, seeds, fungi, and so forth. Maybe even a bird! Bring a lunch and dress warmly.

<b>Tuesday</b> <b>10 November</b> <b>8:00 p.m.</b>	<b>OFNC MONTHLY MEETING</b> <b>CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</b> Speakers: Jane Topping and other members of the conservation committee. The Chairperson and other members of the conservation committee will present a series of talks on topical environmental issues of local interest.
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**Sunday**  
**15 November**  
**9:30 a.m.**      **GENERAL INTEREST WALK – JACKPINE TRAIL**  
Leaders: Ellaine Dickson and Robina Bennett  
Meet: Lincoln Heights Galleria, northeast corner of parking lot, Richmond Road and Assaly Road.  
Bring a snack and dress warmly for this long half-day outing.

**Saturday**  
**28 November**  
**8:00 a.m.**      **LATE FALL MIGRANTS ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER**  
Leader: Bruce Di Labio  
Meet: Entrance to Britannia Filtration Plant.  
This will be a half-day trip to observe interesting birds at various spots along the Ottawa River.

**Sunday**  
**6 December**  
**8:00 a.m.**      **LATE FALL AND EARLY WINTER BIRDS**  
Leader: Tony Beck  
Meet: Westgate Shopping Centre, Carling Avenue, southeast corner of the parking lot.  
Another half-day outing to discover lingering fall migrants as well as some of the interesting species that dwell in the Ottawa District during the winter.

<b>Tuesday</b> <b>8 December</b> <b>8:00 p.m.</b>	<b>OFNC MONTHLY MEETING</b> <b>BEARS</b> Speaker: Dick Russell Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets Dick Russell is with the Canadian Wildlife Service. He has virtually spent a lifetime studying bears and has worked with his father, Andy Russell, the well-known bear expert. This should be a most interesting evening.
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<b>Friday</b> <b>11 December</b> <b>2:00 p.m.</b>	<b>VISIT TO DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE BUTTERFLY COLLECTION (Including Butterfiles)</b> Leader: Dr. Henri Goulet, Research Entomologist. Meet: Front of Neatby Building, 960 Carling Ave. This special visit will provide a tour of the largest insect collection in Canada. Those interested should call Philip Martin (729-3218) in advance; a maximum of 25 people has been set. Drive to the front of the Neatby Building, where someone will be available to advise on parking if there is any problem.
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<b>Tuesday</b> <b>12 January</b> <b>7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>OFNC 114th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING</b> Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets At this meeting we elect our council for 1993, introduce the members who make this club work, and report on the activities of the various committees, as well as the club's financial position. This is an opportunity for you, as members, to participate with any questions and suggestions.
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<b>Saturday</b> <b>30 January</b> <b>8:00 a.m.</b>	<b>WINTER BIRDING AT CORNWALL POWER DAM</b> Leader: Bruce Di Labio Meet: Front entrance, Brooke Claxton Building (Health and Welfare, Canada), de la Colombine Boulevard at Tunney's Pasture. This full day outing will be geared primarily toward the identification of overwintering gulls and waterfowl in the vicinity of the Moses-Saunders Power Dam. Expect the unexpected! Bring a lunch, warm drink and heavy winter clothing as well as proof of Canadian citizenship. (We may go over to the American side.) Transportation will be by private car.
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### *Spring Excursion to Point Pelee*

The club is planning another four-day bus tour to coincide with the peak of spring migration at this world-renowned birding hot spot. The trip is tentatively scheduled for the second weekend in May (Thursday to Sunday inclusive), but only if there is sufficient early response. Those interested should contact the club number (722-3050 after 10:00 a.m.) as soon as possible.☐

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## The GREEN LINE



### THE SHORT STORY...

#### **Britannia Mud Lake**

Ottawa Council will soon consider alternative stormwater management schemes for Britannia. The least destructive alternative would be to have underground stormwater storage tanks which would act as a settlement pond, then the treated water would outfall into Pinecrest Creek just before the creek joins the Ottawa River east of the Britannia Filtration Plant.

#### **Carson Woods to Disappear**

The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has been given another approval on their campaign to develop Carson Woods. The Ontario Municipal Board approved a plan of subdivision for residential and commercial uses on the Gloucester portion of the CMHC lands. Plans for the Ottawa side of the border include a Cite Collegiale campus which will consist of eight major buildings and parking for almost 2000 cars. We citizens of the region will enjoy less opportunity to see wildlife and wildflowers in the heart of the city.

#### **City of Ottawa Official Plan**

The dozens of groups and hundreds of individuals who contributed their time and expertise to the planning process should be vigilant in November when Regional Planning Committee will hold public hearings on the City of Ottawa Draft Official Plan. There is clear danger that it won't receive final approval by Regional Council with the greenspace and environmental policies as originally approved by Ottawa Council.

#### **Environmental Bill of Rights**

You yourself may become the most powerful protector of the natural environment in Ontario if all recommendations of a provincial working group are implemented. The Bill establishes your right to a healthy environment, your right to information, your right to be heard and your right to request review of government decisions. Furthermore, you may even be entitled to split the fine with the government. In a pamphlet, available by calling 1-800-565-4860 toll-free, the provisions of the proposed Environmental Bill of Rights are clearly stated in easy-to-read English.

#### **Ontario Wetlands Policy**

In June of this year, the Wetlands Policy of the OMNR came into effect as it was published in the Ontario Gazette. No news bulletins, not even a mention in the

Ottawa Citizen, remarked on this achievement, which took eleven years to deliver. The Ministers of Municipal Affairs, David Cooke, and Natural Resources, Bud Wildman, jointly published this statement of provincial interest. Under the Ontario Planning Act, municipalities and tribunals must "have regard" for such statements made by various ministries from time to time in all of their decisions. In our region, this affects any project which has yet to receive RMOC Council approval of a Plan of Subdivision. Unfortunately, the specific regulations which are needed for effective monitoring and enforcement are still being drafted. They will form part of an implementation package which will have to address some tough issues such as compensation for loss of private development rights for public benefit. You can expect some headlines when the implementation guidelines are debated in the Ontario legislature at Queen's Park!

#### **Leitrim Wetland Update**

Everyone's waiting with 'bated breath for Minister Ruth Grier's decision on Environmental Assessment Act designation for plans to develop the Leitrim Wetland. A letter from the Leitrim Naturalists' Group to the Honourable Ruth Grier has requested a joint EAB/OMB review of plans to develop the wetland. Meanwhile, the landowner to the south has drawn up plans which include an Environmental Assessment for their portion of the wetland which the OMB has redesignated "Urban". But they unexpectedly requested a delay for the next OMB hearing which would establish their developable lands boundary. Albert Dugal and other naturalists are now tracing the historical outline of the original Leitrim Wetland Complex which extended for many miles beyond remaining core areas.

#### **Constance Creek Court Case Setback**

When the Township of West Carleton failed to enforce their own bylaws which should have prevented the Eagle Creek Golf Course from conducting commercial operations, local environmentalists initiated their own private prosecution of the R.J. Nicol Corporation for violation of municipal policies and bylaws.

Initial excitement at their success at laying charges gave way to dismay when the presiding justice of the peace dismissed the case on a technicality regarding documentation. The Wetland Preservation Group and their lawyer, Rick Lindgren of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, are considering either filing an appeal of the decision or laying entirely new charges.